

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An automated method for correcting for interference in mean cell hemoglobin content (MCH) and mean cell hemoglobin concentration (MCHC) values in a sample comprising red blood cells, wherein said red blood cells comprise intracellular hemoglobin, and wherein said sample further comprises an exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute, said method comprising:
 - (a) analyzing said ~~blood~~ sample on an automated cell-by-cell hematology analyzer ~~without separation of said red blood cells from said extracellular heme-colored blood substitute prior to analysis~~ to measure intracellular hemoglobin concentration and exogenous heme-colored blood substitute concentration in the presence of one another;
 - (b) dividing intracellular hemoglobin concentration (gm/dL), determined by cell-by-cell measurements, by red blood cell concentration (cells/mm³);
 - (c) multiplying the value of (b) by a first constant to correct for differences in units of dimensions to obtain a corrected mean cell hemoglobin content (MCH) value (picograms/cell);
 - (d) dividing the intracellular hemoglobin concentration (gm/dL), determined by cell-by-cell measurements, by the hematocrit (HCT), (%), value; and
 - (e) multiplying the value of (d) by a second constant to correct for differences in units of dimensions to obtain a corrected mean cell hemoglobin concentration (MCHC) value (gm/dL) thereby correcting for interference in the mean cell hemoglobin content (MCH) and mean cell hemoglobin concentration (MCHC) values in the sample.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute in the ~~blood~~ sample is an extracellular hemoglobin product or an oxygen-carrying blood substitute.
3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sample comprising red blood cells is a normal blood sample or an abnormal blood sample.
4. (Canceled)
5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the abnormal blood sample is derived from an individual having a pathological condition.
6. (Original) The method according to claim 5, wherein the pathological condition is selected from the group consisting of blood loss during surgery, blood loss during trauma, and hemorrhagic shock.
7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 2, wherein the exogenous extracellular hemoglobin product or the oxygen-carrying blood substitute is recombinant human hemoglobin.
8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein the recombinant human hemoglobin is isolated and purified from animal blood.
9. (Currently Amended) A system for correcting mean cell hemoglobin content (MCH) and mean cell hemoglobin concentration (MCHC) values in a sample comprising red blood cells, wherein said red blood cells comprise intracellular hemoglobin, and wherein said ~~blood~~ sample

further comprises an exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute, said system comprising:

a) labeling a blood collection container to indicate that the ~~blood~~ sample contained therein comprises an ~~extracellular to said red blood cells~~ exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute;

b) analyzing said ~~blood~~ sample on an automated cell-by-cell hematology analyzer ~~without separation of said red blood cells from said extracellular heme-colored blood substitute prior to analysis~~ to measure intracellular hemoglobin concentration and exogenous heme-colored blood substitute concentration in the presence of one another;

c) correcting automatically for interference in mean cell hemoglobin content (MCH) and mean cell hemoglobin concentration (MCHC) values based on the labeling indication of (a), wherein said correction is performed by the automated analyzer and comprises formula (1):

(1) MCH (corrected), (picograms/cell) =

$$\frac{\text{Intracellular hemoglobin (gm/dL)} \times (\text{constant to correct for units of dimensions})}{\text{Red Blood Cell concentration (cells/mm}^3\text{)}}$$

and formula (2):

(2) MCHC (corrected), (gm/dL) =

$$\frac{\text{Intracellular hemoglobin (gm/dL)} \times (\text{constant to correct for units of dimensions})}{\text{HCT (\%)}}$$

and thereby correcting the mean cell hemoglobin content (MCH) and mean cell hemoglobin concentration (MCHC) values in the sample.

10. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 9, wherein the exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute is an oxygen-carrying hemoglobin substitute recombinant human hemoglobin.

11. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 10, wherein the recombinant human hemoglobin is isolated and purified from animal blood.

12. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 9, wherein the labeling of the blood container comprises a sticker affixed to the container, said sticker being color-coded and/or bar-coded to indicate that the ~~blood~~ sample contained therein comprises an exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute.

13. (Original) The system according to claim 12, wherein the labeling comprises a bar code.

14. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 9, wherein the constant in formula 1 is 10 and the constant in formula 2 is 100.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for automatic correction of interference in a blood chemistry value in a blood, plasma, or serum sample analyzed on an automated cell by cell hematology analyzer, wherein said interference is due to the presence of an ~~extracellular~~ exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute in the blood, plasma, or serum sample, comprising:

a) labeling a sample collection container to indicate that the sample contained therein contains the ~~extracellular~~ exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute, wherein said label signals correction of the blood chemistry value; and

b) correcting automatically the blood chemistry value based on the labeling signal of (a), wherein the correction is performed by the automated hematology analyzer employing the plasma hemoglobin value automatically generated by the automated hematology analyzer; thereby correcting for interference in the analyzed blood, plasma or serum sample.

16. (Currently Amended) A method for automatic correction of interference in a blood chemistry value in a blood, plasma, or serum sample, wherein said interference is due to the presence of an ~~extracellular~~ exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute in the sample, comprising:

a) labeling a sample collection container to indicate that the blood, plasma, or serum sample contained therein contains the ~~extracellular~~ exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute, wherein said label signals correction of the blood chemistry value; and

b) correcting automatically the blood chemistry value based on the labeling signal of (a), wherein the correction is performed by the automated analyzer employing the plasma hemoglobin value automatically generated by the analyzer; wherein the corrected chemistry value is determined by subtracting from the reported chemistry result the following product: (correction factor x blood, plasma or serum hemoglobin value scaled to the appropriate units of dimensions of the reported analytes) thereby correcting for interference in the analyzed sample.

17. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15 or claim 16, wherein the exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute is an oxygen-carrying hemoglobin substitute recombinant human hemoglobin.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the recombinant human hemoglobin is isolated and purified from animal blood.
19. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15 or claim 16, wherein the labeling of the container comprises a sticker affixed to the container, said sticker being color-coded and/or bar-coded to indicate that the sample contained therein comprises an exogenous extracellular heme-colored blood substitute.
20. (Original) The method according to claim 19, wherein the labeling comprises a bar code.
21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15 or claim 16, wherein the blood chemistry value is selected from albumin, alkaline phosphatase (ALP), alanine transaminase (ALT), amylase, aspartate transaminase (AST), urea, calcium, creatinine kinase (CK), bicarbonate, creatinine, creatinine phosphokinase, muscle/brain (CKMB), total bilirubin, gamma glutamyl transferase (GGT), glucose, lactate dehydrogenase (LDH), magnesium, phosphate, lipase, mean cell hemoglobin content (MCH) and mean cell hemoglobin concentration (MCHC).
22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the blood chemistry value is selected from albumin, alkaline phosphatase (ALP), amylase, calcium, bicarbonate, gamma glutamyl transferase (GGT), lactate dehydrogenase (LDH), mean cell hemoglobin content (MCH), mean cell hemoglobin concentration (MCHC) and total bilirubin.
23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the corrected chemistry value is determined by subtracting from the reported chemistry result the following product: (correction factor x blood, plasma or serum hemoglobin value scaled to the appropriate units of dimensions of the reported analytes).

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the first constant is 10 and the second constant is 100.